

PROJECT PLATYPUS

UPPER WIMMERA LANDCARE



Newsletter

PLANTOUT 2015

No. 44 Summer 2015

PLANTOUT 2015

Spread some winter
magic by planting
trees with Landcare
groups this July

TREE PLANTING
LIVE MUSIC
CAMPEIRES
REAL COFFEE
DELICIOUS LOCAL PRODUCE
FRESH AIR
GREAT COMPANY
BEAUTIFUL SCENERY
STAR LIT SKIES

WHEN & WHERE

SAT 4TH JULY HALLS GAP

SAT 11TH JULY POMONAL

SUN 19TH JULY LANDSBOROUGH

SAT 25TH JULY CROWLANDS



BE PART OF IT PLANTOUT 2015

Feature Stories:

PlatypusSPOT

Blue Bell Creeper

Welcome Green Army

WAMA Working Bee

Farewell Staff Members

Chicks in the Sticks Report

Mt William Creek Walk Report



Regular Features:

Project Platypus Update

Perennial Pasture Systems Update

On Ground Works Update

Landcare Groups Update

Grant Information Details

Events Calendar

Board & Staff Members



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Hi Fellow Landcarers.

After such a long spell of dry weather, we are all looking forward to the Autumn break and the beginning of a good year.

Project Platypus is as always a very busy organisation, planning new projects and continuing ongoing ones. Over the last few months the spray crew has completed close to 1,422 ha of targeted weed eradication throughout the catchment on private and public land as well as roadsides.

This is also the time of year that all the revegetation sites are prepared for planting in July. The program for the Plantout weekends are being arranged and are going to be similar to the past couple of years. I hope that you all put a day aside to help make these projects a success. By the time you read this, a large group of participants will have walked the length of Mount William Creek. From all accounts everyone involved had a great time. In this newsletter you will read about a lot of other activities planned over the next few months including some planned by Landcare groups.

At Board level, we have just completed our Strategic Plan for the next 3 years. We have agreed to have a 'Green Army' team work out of Project Platypus. We hope the participants and the Catchment are able to obtain some excellent achievements from this program. At our February Board meeting we toured Overdale (George Holden's property). We were able to see firsthand the great landcare (Sustainable Agriculture) results that have been achieved over 50 years by George and his family.

This year, the Concongella Landcare Group will be hosting the Wimmera Landcare Forum on Tuesday 23rd June. Set aside this day on your calendar. It's a great opportunity to network with landcarers from across the Wimmera, and help shape the direction of local Landcare into the future.

Project Platypus has lost three of our long term staff. I would like to take this opportunity to thank David Margetson, Graham Pearson and Barry Curtis for their dedicated service over a number of years and also welcome back Bronwyn Bant from maternity leave. We also welcome back Bernie Rudolph to the crew, as the Green Army Supervisor.

Yours in Landcare

Phil L. Hall

Phil Hall
Chairman



PlatypusSPOT

Bronwyn Bant

[platypusSPOT](#) is a citizen-science program aiming to improve river health and conservation outcomes for platypuses. While you're out and about, keep an eye out for the elusive platypus in rivers, creeks and dams. Any sightings can be posted to [platypusSPOT](#) along with photos and observations to help ecologists get a clearer picture of where these iconic animals occur. Or you can have a look at [platypusSPOT](#) to see where the best locations are to try and spot platypuses in your local area or holiday spot (be patient, sit quietly at dawn or dusk).

Also please remember to fish, camp and hike responsibly as litter, fishing line and opera house style yabby nets can be lethal for platypuses and other aquatic wildlife (platypusspot.org/learning-centre/conservation-threats). Opera house style nets are illegal to use in public waters in Victoria, ACT and Tasmania, as well as areas of NSW and Qld, and can easily trap and drown platypuses, Rakali (native water rats), and turtles. Hoop-style drop nets are a safe and legal alternative to get a tasty feed of yabbies (see www.depi.vic.gov.au/fishing-and-hunting/recreational-fishing/permitted-fishing-equipment/using-equipment-in-inland-waters).

You can also contact Project Platypus if you see one, on 53584410 or you can register your siting online at www.platypus.org.au



BLUE BELL CREEPER - INVADER FROM THE WEST

Allistair Stephens



Blue Bell Creeper (*Sollya heterophylla*) is a Western Australian native perennial creeper that has been widely planted as a garden ornamental. Away from its natural environment in Western Australia's south west, Blue Bell Creeper (BBC) is a highly invasive weed forming a dense carpet on the ground and climbing trees eventually smothering local species. Seed is spread by animals, particularly birds eating the fruit and excreting the seeds in their droppings. BBC, being an Australian native is hardy and able to survive and prosper in low nutrient and moisture environments.

There are two known infestations of BBC in the Upper Catchment; one around the Grange Golf Club on the highway east of Stawell and the another in the

area of the intersection of Tunnel and Kelly's Beach roads on the southern side of Lake Fyans. The Grange Golf Course infestation received control work in spring 2014 as a trial for further work on the Lake Fyans infestation which is larger in size and poses a significant threat to high value native vegetation in the area. Using Metsulfuron methyl 600g herbicide, our crew were instructed to apply a minimal amount to BBC plants instead of the usual application to run-off stage to minimise off target damage to surrounding native vegetation. This has proven to be highly effective with excellent kill on BBC plants that were growing very strongly at the time due to favourable Spring growing conditions and no damage to surrounding vegetation.

The infestation on the southern side of Lake Fyans has existed for a long time and has steadily increased in size to the point where scattered plants are now obvious along the side of Tunnel Road. Scattered plants are appearing throughout the surrounding bushland illustrating the steady spread of seed away from the origin and the increasing density of plants in the original infestation area. The remnant vegetation around the infestation is Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) and is composed of intact and diverse woodland of Yellow Box, Red Gum and Sheoke and associated understorey species. Adjacent to the area is one of two known Wimmera occurrences of the Candy Spider Orchid (*Caladenia versicolour*) which is a Federally and State listed threatened species. Of further importance is the infestations proximity to the Grampians National Park, linked directly by remnant vegetation providing a corridor for birds to transport BBC from the infestation area into the park.

As a result of discussions held in the quarterly Invasive Plant and Animal committee meetings, community members have raised the control of this infestation as a priority. Project Platypus has been actively seeking funding for control work, having been unsuccessful in two grant applications so far. Funding will eventually be secured and control work will be completed to keep the infestation in check with eventual eradication being the long term aim.

Keep your eyes out for BBC in your area; if you find any or any plants on sale at local nurseries please let us know at the Project Platypus office on 53584410.

WELCOME TO GREEN ARMY

Cathy McDermott

We would like to welcome our new fresh faced and eager recruits to the Green Army team. The Green Army is a voluntary programme for 17-24 year olds interested in protecting their local environment. The Green Army provides young people with skills, training and experience to improve their future career prospects while participating in projects that generate real and lasting benefits for the environment. Projects may be carried out across urban, regional and remote Australia on public land, Indigenous-held lands, or private land where there is a clear community and environmental and heritage benefit.

Some of you will remember our old mate Bernie Rudolph, Bernie has returned to Project Platypus as the Green Army Supervisor. Welcome back Bernie



The Perennial Pasture Systems (PPS) and The Grasslands Society combined to present one of the series of Victorian and South Australian MLA pasture updates in Stawell on March 24th.

Sixty three people attended the evening session which had the title "fast food" and looked at options for producers to fill the feed gaps in their animal production systems after the tough summer just experienced.

Andrew Speirs from Meridian Ag Casterton took an in depth look at the use of gibberellic acid in encouraging winter growth in perennials. Ralph Berhendt Dept of Economic Development Hamilton and David Brady Landmark Ararat agronomist then discussed grazing canola and cereals in crop and grazing operations.

Options for short term pastures with ryegrass were covered by Tim Brown of AGF Seeds while Michael Grant from Stephen Pasture Seeds discussed grazing brassicas.

Seminar attendees also heard from Josh Douglas from Melbourne University who is doing a PhD into predicting outbreaks of the pasture pest red legged earth mite and is going to conduct research on PPS member's farms.

After a break for dinner, the speakers reconvened for a panel session ably moderated by Grasslands Society President James Whale; he set out a scenario for the coming autumn and asked the panel to provide their options for filling the feed gap. This was followed by some tough questions for the panel on how their ideas can be adapted to the tough soils of the upper Wimmera.

The panel finished with closing comments from the speakers and their consensus was summed up by Ralph Berhendt who said that "the fastest food after the autumn break is a well managed perennial pasture and that short term options give producers the ability to utilise them while protecting the perennials for the long term".

PPS Paul Harrington ended the seminar with a thank you to the speakers and acknowledgement of the cooperation between the Grasslands Society and PPS; he also thanked MLA and the Northern Grampians Shire for their support for the event.



WILDLIFE ART MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA (WAMA) - WORKING BEE

Wildlife Art Museum of Australia Working Bee Sat 9th May - Sun 10th May

The Wildlife Art Museum of Australia (WAMA), is a not for profit organisation devoted to the establishment of Australia's only museum and gallery featuring our wildlife arts. This will be established on our property on the Pomonal Road just out of Halls Gap. The museum and gallery will be surrounded by a spectacular Australian native botanic garden, as well as a large and beautiful wetland. The site already protects a lovely area of Grampians Heathy Woodland, Grassy Woodland and Riparian Woodland and scrub. Both this and the wetland are permanently protected with Trust for Nature Conservation Covenants. Several of our volunteers have become members of Jallukar and Stawell Urban Landcare Groups, and Project Platypus were invaluable last year in helping us remove rabbits from the property and the adjoining unused road reserve. Two of our members are also part of the Project Platypus Grampians to Pyrenees Biolink team.

On May 9th -10th we are having a two day working bee to hopefully continue the planting of locally indigenous shrubs in the Covenanted area (depending on the autumn break). As well as the plantout, there will be lots of work cutting up a number of exotic trees that have to be removed from the site, removing internal fences, as well as cleaning up fallen timber which poses a threat as rabbit harbor as well as a fire risk. Works will begin at **9 AM on Saturday morning**, and continue throughout the day, with breaks for guided tours of the property and our plans for the site. On Saturday evening we will have a community BBQ and music session around the campfire –BYO guitar!! Sunday will continue works being done on Saturday, with breaks for guided tours, bird watching, plant identification and much more! BYO food, drinks and camping gear. Toilets, BBQ's, drinking/washing water, tea and coffee will be supplied. Please bring your gloves, protective clothing, chainsaws, shovels etc for the works to be done.

If we get time we will also begin making a temporary bird hide, using branches from the exotic trees.

This will be a great opportunity for locals to come along and help out for a few hours, a day, or the weekend. We will have displays and information about WAMA on display and those interested can join our group of volunteers and become regular supporters, receiving our quarterly newsletters on progress with WAMA, workshops, open garden days, exhibitions and much more.

WAMA is on the corner of Halls Gap Pomonal Road and Neal Road, diagonally opposite and south of Halls Gap Zoo.



FAREWELL TO DEDICATED STAFF MEMBERS

Leigh Blackmore

Project Platypus is saying goodbye to three longstanding and valuable employees. David Margetson began with Project Platypus in 2008 as the Rabbit Facilitator helping Landcare Groups coordinate their rabbit control programs. After a couple of years in this role an opportunity arose to take responsibility of Project Platypus's Native Vegetation Program. David took on this challenge with great enthusiasm and assisted over 150 landholders in the Upper Wimmera to protect and establish almost 1000 hectares with the planting of approximately 300,000 indigenous trees, shrubs and understory plants. This work will have a long and lasting benefit to the environment of the Upper Wimmera Catchment. David has left Project Platypus to spend more time on his farm and associated business at Red Rock Olives.



Graham Pearson started with Project Platypus late in 2010 where he joined the Invasive Plant and Animal Team after moving to the area from Kangaroo Island. Graham offered the weeds team some much needed stability and with his attention to detail and thirst for excellence the weeds program was taken to a new level. Graham continued this work for the next 4 years reducing the infestations of environmental and agricultural weeds found in the Upper Wimmera Catchment. Before leaving Graham discussed the change he had observed over the 4 years



involved. Together with Landholders, Landcare Groups and other partners such as Local Government, Parks Victoria, Wimmera CMA & GWMWater Graham has led a small team of workers to make the Upper Wimmera Catchment one of the most weeds free environments in Victoria. During the last 6 months Graham has coordinated the 'Invasive Plants and Animals' and 'Landmate' Programs, playing a significant role in the Moyston Fire Recovery works. Graham will be moving back to Kangaroo Island to manage his small business which he had someone looking after while in the Upper Wimmera.



Barry Curtis started working with Project Platypus as a volunteer back in 2007 assisting with a review of the financial management system. This task grew into the development of an entirely new system and with the resignation of Judy Sheppard as the Project Platypus bookkeeper, Barry was then offered a more permanent position. Over the 8 years involved Barry assisted in taking Project Platypus's Financial Management and Payroll systems to another level. This work has helped give confidence to the Project Platypus Board and funders regarding the professional accountability of our organisation's finances which has enabled the substantial amount of on ground achievements over this time. Barry has made the decision to relocate further north to escape the cold southern winters and be closer to family. Each of these people have given more than what has been expected, going beyond the 'call of duty'. On behalf of the Upper Wimmera Landcare Community I'd like to express a big THANK YOU for your amazing individual contributions.

CHICKS IN THE STICKS REPORT

Bronwyn Bant



Close to thirty ladies embarked on a Chicks in the Sticks road trip to Taranaki Farm in Woodend on Friday March 20. It was great to see familiar faces as well as many new faces on the tour. Ben Falloon took over the family farm in 2000, and soon observed that conventional farming practices were no longer working. Ben uses the Polyface farming model, developed by Joel Salatin, who has been described by Time Magazine as the world's most innovative farmer.

Polyface is a grass-based, "beyond organic", direct-marketing, alternative farming method, free of chemicals. A mixture of cattle, free range chickens, pigs and broilers are all pasture fed and rotated across the property daily. Ben provided us with a tour of the property, explaining how he regenerates pasture using stock, and shared some of the bureaucratic challenges he regularly faces. We were also given a tour of the farm shop which is currently under construction. It was fantastic to learn from Ben's experiences.

To finish the day, we headed to the historic Red Beard Bakery for a delicious lunch and tour of the wood fired oven.

Feedback from the day was really positive, and we look forward to continuing Chicks in the Sticks in the future. To learn more head to <http://www.taranakifarm.com.au/> Or <http://www.polyfacefarms.com/>. Thanks must go to SITA Australia and the Wimmera CMA for making the event possible.



At the end of March, an 80 km walk was planned to follow the Mt William Creek from its source behind Moyston, near Kalymna Falls, across the 'miles' to Dadswells Bridge area where the creek joins the Wimmera River.

On a Saturday morning Bernie Rudolph was at the Nater's property to greet about 30 walkers. After viewing the dry stream bed among the stately tall gnarled red gums the trek began. Along with the farmers dog, walkers from 7 to 70 years were away. Crossing beautiful farming land that is temporarily very dry, we enjoyed the sounds of kookaburras, galahs and cockatoos. Climbing through fences we soon entered the creek reserves and observed the benefits of this more recent landcare management.

Along the way Jallukar Landcare, Moyston Landcare and Northern Grampians Landcare members were meeting us as this was an assisted event initiated by the Jallukar Landcare Group. Morning tea stops and some nourishment was welcome from our day packs. Being school holidays it was great to be accompanied by a few families with youngsters who really appeared to enjoy the adventure, especially in the creek bed climbing the old logs and looking for skinks and lizards.

Each evening many walkers set up their tents and enjoyed a tasty meal on a local's property. Special thanks to the chefs and salad and sweets providers on two evenings. Being a senior walker I only took part each morning but did enjoy meeting the campers in the evening to sit by the creek, share stories, watch Neil's bird presentation, and sample Blake's bush tucker provided by Outback Spirit. Later, I slipped away quietly to a motel bed! Some walkers joined the group for a day or so that fitted their schedule. Camping at Mokepilly where there is a large permanent waterhole seemed a wonderful spot to soak up the charm of the River Red Gums that are so majestic along our creeks.

Next morning, crossing a deeply cracked, dry wetland, following kilometres of the mostly waterless creek bed, climbing up and down the sandy banks, observing many piles of logs that had been washed together in flood times and enjoying the little birds that were present around the few waterholes, we hastened along. On this, the third morning of our four day walk, a five year old lad was skipping along with us. A some 12-15 km -or so jaunt! His 3 siblings all embraced the challenge. After midday, emerging rather weary, out of the bushland to the sight of a very, very low Lake Lonsdale was the highlight of my experience. Backed by the Grampians view, the stark skeleton trees and blackened logs in one direction, and a mob of sheep grazing on the lake floor when looking eastward, and still a 2 kilometre walk to Greenhole for the lunch stop!

Many, many thanks to Cathy, Bernie, leaders, organisers, and supporters in the background for your energy and enthusiasm. Another pleasure was the new friendships formed between fellow walkers on their Wimmera adventure. This event was only possible because of the wonderful cooperation between local farmers, their families, and the team at Project Platypus and Landcare.

Article supplied by Margaret Margitta (nee Greenway) who grew up at Wal Wal (1945 - 1962) and always loves to return to the Wimmera.



Photos provided by Angela Turrell



MOUNT WILLIAM CREEK WALK

The week we walked Mt William Creek
The weather was sublime.
Crunching feet made a steady beat
Gentle souls trekking in time.

We marvelled at the red gum's girth,
The Grampians changing hue.
We listened to farmers of thirsty earth
Admiring their workplace view.

Campfires at night under skies starry bright,
Ringed speakers sharing their reckoning.
Grampians majestic in morning light
Mt William Creek now beckoning.

Support was friendly, bladders kept empty
Victuals, chattels in tow.
Planners, leaders, feeders aplenty,
Volunteers saw The Walk flow.

Five days trek a long dry creek bed
Wimmera confluence our purpose.
Bush and natural beauty led
To awareness Project Platypus.

The week we walked Mt William Creek
The weather was sublime.
Crunching feet made a steady beat
Gentle souls suspended in time.

By Jan Weston

ON GROUND WORKS UPDATE

INVASIVE PLANTS & ANIMALS : by Allistair Stephens

Since our last update, the Project Platypus invasive plant and animal control program has continued on with a wide variety of different project tasks across the Upper Catchment. During this time, long term employee of our spray crew and recently part of the office team Graham Pearson has decided to call it quits here at Project Platypus. He will be sorely missed and we are sure that landholders that have dealt with Graham during his time on the spray gun will also miss his friendly and professional manner and attention to detail. Good luck Graham from everyone. Work over the busy spring control period in 2014 commenced with Bridal Creeper control in Jallukar Forest for Parks Victoria. This work follows on from last year's control program which is starting to see some real gains for this significant area of remnant vegetation. Parks Victoria has also engaged our spray crew to perform follow-up spraying on St John's Wort in the Ararat Hills Regional Park to support work completed in the same area last year.



One Leaf Cape Tulip, Bridal Creeper and rabbits were controlled along Mt William creek to the south of Dadswells Bridge for the Northern Grampians Landcare Group as part of a two year project. This will see follow-up control in Spring next year that will prove effective in controlling these long term pest species of the area. Follow-up spraying of Paterson's Curse was also completed along a section Greens Creek in the Joel Joel area which has been drastically reduced over the last three years by a concerted effort by local landholders.

The annual survey and mapping program for Chilean Needle Grass (CNG) in and around Moyston was completed in November with good news from the sustained control program over the last three years. About 1.9 hectares of CNG affected land was mapped in the 2014 program, down from 2.8 hectares last. The numbers don't really represent the full story with one large area of about 1.3 hectares in size was mapped but with a really low density (<1% cover) of CNG plants present as a result of boom spraying not being completely effective. This year's control work is predicted to take only one day which is down from 4 – 5 days in the initial phase of the program a couple of years ago. Project Platypus completed two days of Blue Bell Creeper (BBC) control in the area of the Grange Golf Course on the highway east of Stawell in response to the concern of the local landcare community. BBC is a Western Australian native creeper planted as an ornamental species that is a very invasive plant in many areas of Australia. The work around the Grange Golf Club has been very effective and was a trial for the larger and long standing infestation on the southern edge of Lake Fyans that threatens a significant area of remnant vegetation and threatened species.

For the second year running, Stawell Urban Landcare Group has engaged Project Platypus to control woody weeds (mainly Broom species) in and around Stawell. Our work over the last two years is plain to see when you drive around town with not a lot of broom looking green anymore. In conjunction with work completed for Northern Grampians Shire Council on roadsides things look pretty good but will require a sustained effort into the future to control new emergent plants from seed in the soil.

Further work has been completed for Northern Grampians Shire Council on roadsides in Stawell and in the Lubeck / Wal Wal area. Rabbit ripping and follow-up fumigation was completed in the Vineyard Road area of Greens Creek.

A long term program to control a large area of Spiny Rush to the south of Lake Fyans was commenced in December with a bulldozer being used to clear access lanes through some of the thickest Spiny Rush in the area for our spray crew. Spraying has been ongoing through February with over 30,000 litres of Glyphosate / Metsulfuron mix put out to date. The end result of this project will be around 20 hectares of land cleared of Spiny Rush and contribute to a larger goal of controlling the spread of this species into prone areas along the Mt William Creek. Our crew is currently working on roadsides managed by the Ararat Rural City Council (ARCC) which is the third year in a row we have undertaken this work. Year three will see our crew complete some follow-up work on previously covered roads but will also see the previously un-controlled roads covered.

LANDMATE : by Graham Pearson

Langi Kal Landmate now have two crews in operation and during November were busy undertaking revegetation and remnant protection fencing around Smeaton and Buangor along with tree planting at Addington. They also did some weeding around Lake Burrumbeet and removed Early Black Wattle from Mt Buangor State Park. Tree watering was carried out at Lismore and Mt Mercer. BEN Reserve in Ballarat used the Landmate crew for repairing paths, rabbit control, tree removal, weed eradication and tree guard replacing.



LANDMATE : by Graham Pearson... CONTINUED

The Ararat Landmate crew were also very busy during November/December with rabbit fumigation in the Elmhurst area and rolling up netting in the Black Range area. They also did track clearing for Parks Vic, planting and guarding trees along with quite a lot of revegetation and riparian fencing in the Concongella area. There was also some spot spraying of Patterson's Curse around Moyston for the Moyston LC Group. Due to the lack of rain some tree watering was also needed. Perennial Pasture Systems sites at Glenlofty were fenced.

In early January the Moyston fire recovery work took priority with all three crews on the ground early firstly rolling up burnt fencing and then erecting new fences. This has been the focus of their work up until now. There has been extremely good feedback from landholders who have been using the crews. If you would like to register for any environmental or community work please contact Cathy McDermott on 03 53584410 who has taken over as the Landmate Coordinator.

NATIVE VEGETATION: by Alistair Stephens

The 2015 planting season will see around 37,600 stems being put in the ground which is around the same number achieved in last year's revegetation program. The majority of these projects are within the Grampians to Pyrenees (G2P) target areas and are confirmed for planting. A number of member Landcare groups have submitted applications to fund the remaining projects that fall outside of the G2P area; approval of these applications is still pending.



We also have two significant remnant protection projects in progress, one bordering Dunneworthy forest to protect 15.7 hectares of nice intact Yellow Box – Stringy Bark woodland with some Buloke trees present. The second remnant protection project will see a total of 80 hectares of predominately Brown Stringy Bark – Box woodland with a small pocket of Red Iron Bark protected within the remnant. Significant to this project is an area of about 7 hectares of mature Buloke trees that will be fenced out with about 500 Buloke trees to be planted to enhance the remnant with another 500 associated species going into the area. To further enhance the habitat value of the 80 hectares, around 30 nesting boxes will be installed of varying sizes to support a diversity of bats, birds and hopefully small mammals.

Planning for this year's Plantout events is well underway and will see a similar sequence of smaller planting events over the four weekends in July. Other smaller

projects around the Catchment will be planted by school groups and landholders as has happened in previous years.

As always, if you are interested in revegetation or fencing out a patch of remnant vegetation on your property please contact the Project Platypus office on 53584410 and we will come out and have a look and discuss the possibilities with you.

NOTICE

If you have Project Platypus planting or fencing tools we are in the process of organising this years Plantout and we would like to account for tools that have been borrowed. Please call the office on 53584410.

MOYSTON LANDCARE GROUP TOUR

Rosie Nater



The March Moyston Landcare Group meeting included a tour of Daryl and Anne Marshall's vintage vehicle and machinery collection. Our group also invited the Blaze Aid volunteers to join us for a BBQ and machinery tour. Pictured is Daryl's 1922 Dodge, which is in running order. Landcare members also looked at his Caterpillar collection. A total of 40 came along for an enjoyable evening.

UPPER WIMMERA LANDCARE GROUPS UPDATE

Black Range:

President: Neil Marriott

Secretary: Helen Rosenbaum

Black Range Landcare group recently applied through the Wimmera CMA for a regional community grant to assist landholders in the Granny's Lane area of the Black Range to control Watsonia, One Cape Tulip and rabbits. All three species are a big problem along Donald Creek that flows east from the Granny's Lane area and joins the Concongella creek just west of Great Western. If the grant is successful the money will be used to help landholders along this tributary of the Concongella Creek to engage contractors or complete control works on their own.

Concongella:

President: Malcolm Nicholson

Secretary: Mark McLean

Concongella Landcare Group have been carrying on with pest plant and animal control in the Concongella area. Individual landcare group members have been working on keeping rabbit numbers down by the removal of harbour

Crowlands

President: Rod Vearing

Secretary: Harold Thomas

Crowlands Landcare group have carried out extensive pest plant and animal control. The group have been targeting infestations of Spiny Rush. To maximise grant money, landcare group members carried out work using the groups spray trailer. Landholders in the Landcare group have been controlling rabbit harbour with a 50/50 cash contribution system. The Landcare group were successful in obtaining a Victorian Landcare grant.

Elmhurst:

President: Michael Roberts

Secretary: Mandy Preston

Elmhurst Landcare group have recently completed another rabbit control program. Funding was obtained through Victorian Landcare Grants. The project involves the removal of rabbit harbour through ripping. Landholders contributed 50% of the costs. The landcare group has also ran another successful 'rabbit buster campaign'. The group organise their own transport of 1080 baited carrots. Once paperwork is processed the carrots mix is then distributed to landholders and other Landcare Groups. The group believe that timing is crucial for this method of control. Baiting is more effective when used immediately.

Great Western:

President: Mark Kindred

Secretary: Paul Dakis

No action

Jallukar:

President: Michael McMurtrie

Secretary: Phil Williams

Jallukar Landcare group have undertaken a project to control spiny rush. The site is an extensive infestation that has required heavy machinery to push in access tracks in order for vehicles to reach the site. Funding for this project was made possible through the Victorian Landcare Grants program. The group have had an interpretive sign designed and printed. Group members are in the process of constructing a frame work for the sign to be erected at the reserve in Millers Creek.

Landsborough:

President: Daryl Leslie

Secretary: Greg Dean

No action.

Moyston:

President: David Coad

Secretary: Rosie Nater

Blaze Aid, founded by Kevin Butler after the 2009 Black Saturday fires, set up camp at the Moyston Oval three days after the recent Moyston fire. Initially they assisted landholders, large and small to clean up burnt fences and buildings, before moving onto fence reconstruction. Moyston Landcare Group provided an evening meal for the volunteers as part of a 2 week roster. DEPI ran a Farmplan 21 course on 19th Feb to 26th March. Spiny Rush spraying was done along a Salt creek tributary. The Group organised a free Chemical Resistance Session in April and had an information tent at Moyston Easter market again this year. The Chilean Needle Grass Annual Report was presented to stakeholders and the community in February, with results of the last 3 years control work being very encouraging.

Navarre:

President: Shane Bibby

Secretary: Richard & Liz Kelleher

No action

Northern Grampians:

President: Peter Jackman

Secretary: Leanne Jackman

Northern Grampians Landcare group have recently completed a community weed control project. Target weeds include Bridal Creeper, Cape Tulip, African Boxthorn, Horehound and St Johns Wort. This project includes some rabbit control work also. Funding for this project was obtained through the Communities for Nature program.

Stawell Urban:

President: Mandy Smith

Secretary: Cathy McDermott

Stawell Urban Landcare group have had success with their Nesting Box Program with evidence of small animals using the boxes. Due to the success of this project, SULC have applied for further funding to continue monitoring the boxes and maintaining and checking the cameras. The group participated in Clean Up Australia Day at the Rifle Range Reserve and held two very successful rubbish collection days along the Western Highway as part of the Adopt-a-Highway program. For the second year running, Stawell Urban Landcare Group has engaged Project Platypus to control woody weeds (mainly Broom species) in and around Stawell.

If you would like to include more information about your group please send your article to Cathy McDermott at admin@platypus.org.au or for further information contact Regional Landcare Facilitator, Bob Wallace 53584410.

GRANT INFORMATION DETAILS

Title/Provider	Grant Detail/ Aims	Closing Date	Value
Farm Finance Concessional Loans & Farm Household Allowance	Help for farmers and their families experiencing financial hardship	30th June	Allowance Ongoing Loan
Farmers Market Support Program Regional Development Victoria	Aims to develop Farmers Markets across Victoria by supporting their economic sustainability and promoting the supply of clean, green local produce direct from farmer to consumer	Ongoing	Up to \$20,000

EVENTS CALENDAR

May	
9-10	WAMA Working Bee (see advertisement on page 4)
4	Project Platypus UW Landcare Board Meeting 7.30pm @ Project Platypus Office
6	Moyston Landcare Group General Meeting 7.30pm @ Fire Station
12	Stawell Urban Landcare Group General Meeting 7.00pm @ J Pye's
18	Partnerships & Funding Sub-Committee Meeting 7.30pm @ Project Platypus Office
25	Native Vegetation & Waterways Sub-Committee Meeting 7.30pm @ Project Platypus Office
June	
TBC	Dung Beetle Workshop
23	Wimmera Landcare Forum 10am - 3.30pm at Joel Hall for more details contact Bron Bant on 53584410
July	
4	Halls Gap Plantout, Foodie Theme
11	Pomonal Plantout, Backpacker Theme
19	Landsborough Plantout, Foodie Theme
25	Crowlands Plantout, Family/Scouts Theme



PROJECT PLATYPUS COMMITTEE & STAFF MEMBERS

The Board - Project Platypus

Phil Hall, Chairman
 Michael Greene, Treasurer
 Mark McKew
 Leanne Jackman, Vice Chairman
 Rosie Nater
 Michael McMurtrie
 Lachie Green, Secretary
 Ian Nicholson
 Richard Kelleher
 Rod Vearing

Concongella Landcare Group
 Elmhurst Landcare Group
 Crowlands Landcare Group
 Northern Grampians Landcare Group
 Moyston Landcare Group
 Jallukar Landcare Group
 Jallukar Landcare Group
 Stawell Urban Landcare Group
 Navarre Landcare Group
 Crowlands Landcare Group

Committee Members

Partnerships & Funding
 Native Vegetation & Waterways

Invasive Plants & Animals

Sustainable Agriculture
 Community Engagement

Leanne Jackman, Michael Greene, Michael McMurtrie, Ian Nicholson
 Rosie Nater, George Holden, Phil Williams, Rob Arnts, Neil Howell, Luke Austin (WCMA),
 David Margetson, Peter Start, Allistair Stephens
 Rosie Nater, Neil Marriott, Wendy Marriott, Ross McGregor, Malinda Godino, George Holden,
 Deidre Andrews, Mark Toomey, John Miles, Peter Brazier, Ray Graham, Kath Gosden, Daryl Leslie,
 John Stevens, Geoff Penna, Doug Boatman, Allistair Stephens
 Mark McKew, Leanne Jackman, Rosie Nater, Larry McLean, Steph Arnts, Rob Shea, Bob Wallace
 Leanne Jackman, Rosie Nater, Madelene Townsend, Bronwyn Bant, Cathy McDermott, Bob Wallace,
 Mandy Smith

Staff

Leigh Blackmore
 Bob Wallace
 Allistair Stephens
 Bronwyn Bant
 Loki McIntyre
 Bernie Rudolph
 Dene Marshall
 Paul Hayward
 Catherine McDermott

Manager
 Regional Landcare Facilitator/Landmate Coordinator
 Project Manager (Invasive Plant & Animal Program)
 Events Coordinator (Community Engagement)
 Invasive Plants & Animals Coordinator
 Green Army Supervisor
 Weed Control Supervisor
 Weed Control Operator
 Administration Officer/Landmate Coordinator

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This newsletter has been put together by staff of the Project Platypus Landcare Team with contributions from local Landcare group members.

Please forward any contributions for future newsletters to
Catherine McDermott at cath@platypus.org.au

Project Platypus
Upper Wimmera Landcare Network

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**PROJECT
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